

# Life Group Content Guide





# Life Group Content Guide

At CCC, we would like our life groups to share a common core of subject matters that they study through over time. Toward that end, we've compiled a list of seventeen subjects, which are detailed on the following pages. While this list is not intended to be comprehensive (as if these subjects are the only ones necessary for Christian maturity), we do believe that it can serve as a good core of content that groups can focus on over time.

Because our groups meet at varying levels of frequency (some every week, some every other week), we are not going to prescribe the *pace* at which you work through these subjects. Some may take several months to work through, while others may take several weeks. Nor will we prescribe the *order* in which you work through these subjects. While we do want groups to work their way through all of these subjects at some point, we also want groups to feel freedom to choose which subjects seem most timely for them.

## How to Use This Guide

We'd recommend that life groups and life group leaders use this guide in the following two ways:

1. Use it to help determine *which subject* to focus on next.
  - For each subject matter, we have a short description of that domain of Christian life and why it is so important for believers to give attention to it.
  - We'd encourage life group leaders to share this list of subjects with their groups and to determine together which subject matter they'd like to focus on next, being sensitive to the differing needs of the members of their groups.
2. Use it to determine *what approach* to take to process that subject together.
  - For each subject matter, we list key biblical texts that are related to that subject matter. And we list at least a few different resources that groups could use to help them in processing the subject. These include articles, books, video series, studies, sermons, etc. We have copies of many of these in the library or the church office that life group leaders could preview or even borrow to use with their groups.
  - In most circumstances, we'd recommend using one of the listed resources as your group goes through the subject. But since our groups' demographics vary widely, some groups may like to have group members purchase and work through studies together, while others may use the resources more loosely as a guide for the leader himself and let him think through how to utilize it in the guiding of group meetings.
  - Regardless, we want groups to be getting into *the Word* together, and to be growing in their understanding and application of the Scriptures regarding these subjects.

## Keeping the Big Picture in Mind

It's appropriate here to zoom out and remember the role of life groups in the broader process of discipleship at CCC. At CCC, we want every member of the church to be involved in three core elements of discipleship: worship, community, and service. While there are other supplemental venues for discipleship that we offer and value, these three are the core...

- **Worship:** We want members to be gathering Sunday morning by Sunday morning to worship the Lord together. As we pray, sing, give offerings, participate in the ordinances, and hear the Word read and preached each Lord's Day, God is honored and believers are built up in their faith and knowledge of Him.
- **Community:** We want members to be involved in a life group, where they can consistently experience and provide loving community with fellow believers, helping each other grow in our understanding of Scripture and our practical obedience to Christ.
- **Service:** We want members to be using the gifts that the Spirit has given them in serving fellow believers at CCC, growing in our skill and effectiveness in using those gifts to build the body up.

# List of 17 Subjects

Each of these will be unpacked on the pages that follow

Gospel Foundations  
Friendship  
Marriage  
Singleness  
Parenting  
One Anothering  
Scripture Intake  
Worship  
Prayer  
Spiritual Gifts  
Evangelism & Mission  
Gospel Foundation  
Work/Rest  
Suffering  
Navigating Change  
Generosity  
Sexual Purity

# Gospel Foundations

## Description

The apostle Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes” (Romans 1:16). All Christians know that we must believe the gospel in order to be saved, but many fail to see the gospel’s relevance for daily living. Part of the purpose of our life groups is to help each other remember the gospel and help each other see how it comes to bear on our daily living. The gospel is not just to be the door to the kingdom, but the entire house in which we live.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Isaiah 53:1-10
- Ephesians 2:1-10
- 1 Corinthians 15:1-7
- Ephesians 1:3-14

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Living the Cross-Centered Life by C.J. Mahaney (Amazon, ~\$13)
  - Blurb: “The book you now hold in your hands is nothing less than a manifesto for turning your world upside down. C.J. Mahaney wants you to know and experience the cross centered life. Thus, I need to warn you that reading this book will not be a safe and static experience. After all, the cross isn’t about playing it safe; it’s about being found safe in Christ—and that is the most exhilarating experience a human being can ever know.”
- The Gospel for Real Life by Jerry Bridges (Amazon, ~\$11)
  - Has Study questions in the back of the book
  - Blurb: “The gospel provides for our eternal salvation, but how does it benefit us day to day? Find out how the gospel transforms you daily into Christlikeness.”

### VIDEOS

- “The Gospel in Life: Grace Changes Everything” – 8 session study with Tim Keller (Amazon, ~\$28)
  - Blurb: “Join author and pastor Timothy Keller in this eight-week small group bible study, *Gospel in Life*, to explore how the gospel can change your heart, community, and how you live out the Gospel in our world.”

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “Impediments to a Gospel-Centered Life” – Erik Raymond: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/impediments-to-a-gospel-centered-life/>
- “John Calvin’s Beautiful Description of the Gospel-Centered Life” – Justin Taylor: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/john-calvins-beautiful-description-of-the-gospel-centered-life/>
- “A Gospel Primer for Christians: Learning to See the Glories of God’s Love” – Milton Vincent (available in Resource Center)

# Friendship

## Description

C.S. Lewis says this about friendship: “(friendship) has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival.”<sup>1</sup> Friendship is one of the things that tend to be more natural when we are children but not as natural when we are adults. Like Lewis says, it is not something that we often find necessary; however if we do not have it, life can become miserable. It is something that needs exploring and needs pursuing when we are adults. Hopefully your Life Group can have a good discussion about friendship and how it is needed and often missing in adult relationships.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Psalm 25:14
- Proverbs 17:17-18; 18:24; 25:9; 26:18-19; 27:6, 9, 14,17; 29:5
- John 15:13-17

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Befriend by Scott Sauls (Amazon, ~\$11)
  - Has application questions at the end of chapters
  - Blurb: “We live in a world where real friendship is hard to find. Suspicious of others and insecure about ourselves, we retreat into the safety of our small, self-made worlds. Now more than ever, it’s easy to avoid people with whom we disagree or whose life experiences don’t mirror our own. Safe among like-minded peers and digital “friends,” we really don’t have to engage with those who can challenge and enhance our limited perspectives. Tragically, even the church can become a place that minimizes diversity and reinforces isolation. Jesus models a much richer vision of friendship. Scott Sauls, pastor and teacher, invites you to see the breadth of Christ’s love through expanding your circle of friends.”
- Made for Friendship by Drew Hunter (Amazon, ~\$14)
  - Has discussion questions at the end of chapters
  - Blurb: “Friendship is one of the deepest pleasures of life. But in our busy, fast-paced, mobile world, we’ve lost this rich view of friendship and instead settled for shallow acquaintances based on little more than similar tastes or shared interests. Helping us recapture a vision of true friendship, pastor Drew Hunter explores God’s design for friendship and what it really looks like in practice—giving us practical advice to cultivate the kinds of true friendships that lead to true and life-giving joy.”

### SERMONS

- “Good Company” – Pastor Marc: <http://christscovenant.org/sermons/wu8/>
- “Friendship” – Pastor Tim Keller: <https://gospelinlife.com/downloads/friendship-5396/>

### ARTICLES

- “Church, This is a Call for Familial Friendship” – Christine Hoover: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/church-this-is-a-call-for-familial-friendship/>
- “The Gift of Friendship” – Kevin DeYoung: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/tgc-web/static-blogs/kevin-deyoung/files/2011/08/TheGiftofFriendship.pdf/>

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, C.S. *The Four Loves* Chapter on Friendship

# Marriage

## Description

Ephesians 5 speaks about marriage as a way that we can tangibly see what Jesus has done for his Church. Christ loves, cherishes, and lays himself down for the church; and so in marriage we are to do the same for our spouse. Marriage is one of the greatest graces that can be given to us, but it is also one of the most growing and difficult things we upon which can embark. It is something that we cannot do on our own, and we need others in our Life Groups speaking into our lives about our marriages.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Genesis 2:15-25
- 1 Corinthians 7:1-16
- Ephesians 5:22-33
- 1 Peter 3:1-12

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- When Sinners Say “I Do” by Dave Harvey (Amazon, ~\$11)
  - Has separate Study Guide (Amazon, ~\$7)
  - Blurb: “Marriage is the union of two people who arrive at the altar toting some surprisingly large luggage. Often it gets opened right there on the honeymoon, sometimes it waits for the week after. The Bible calls it sin and understanding its influence can make all the difference for a man and woman who are building a life together. When Sinners Say ‘I Do’ is about encountering the life-transforming power of the gospel in the unpredictable journey of marriage.”
- The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller (available in the Resource Center)
- Loving Your Wife as Christ Loves the Church by Larry McCall (available in the Resource Center)

### VIDEO SERIES

- “What Did You Expect?” DVD series by Paul Tripp
  - 10 video sessions
  - Accompanying Study Guide (can be downloaded for free at [https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/1804/leaders\\_guide\\_what\\_did\\_you\\_expect.pdf/](https://www.speakcdn.com/assets/1804/leaders_guide_what_did_you_expect.pdf/))

### SERMONS

- “Marriage: God’s Story and Yours” – two sermons from Jim Hamilton, delivered at CCC
  - <http://christscovenant.org/sermon-series/marriage-gods-story-yours/>

### ARTICLES

- “The Unique Gospel Power of a Spouse” – Ronni Kurtz: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/the-unique-gospel-power-of-a-spouse/>
- “10 Ways to Grow Your Marriage While Having Young Kids” – Gavin Ortlund: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/10-ways-to-grow-your-marriage-while-having-young-kids/>
- “Marital Intimacy is More Than Sex” – Josh Squires: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/marital-intimacy-is-more-than-sex/>

# Singleness

## Description

Every person comes into the world as a single person. Regularly this is seen as a temporary state that will end when the person becomes a married person. Every married person though has roughly a 50% chance to be single again. Even more so, there are some in our church that will never be married or may have an extended period of singleness in their life. Therefore we need to do some reflection on singleness. How do we prepare for it, how do we encourage singles in our church, and how do we become a church that doesn't see singleness as a disability but as something God sees as beautiful?

## Important Scriptural Passages

- 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- The Rich Single Life by Andy Farmer (Amazon, ~\$5)
  - Has discussion questions at the end of chapters
  - Blurb: "Can an unmarried Christian adult expect more than a life of coping, hoping, and minimal moping? Yes! Along with the challenges of singleness come priceless advantages. Your season of singleness can be one of great richness, focus, and fulfillment in God. Learn to live The Rich Single Life. With a foreword by Joshua Harris, this book's format is good for both small group use and personal devotions."
- Seven Myths About Singleness by Sam Allberry (Amazon, ~\$15)
  - *Note: Releasing in February of 2019*
  - Blurb: "While singleness is often widely misunderstood by many in the church today and often viewed in negative terms, the Bible speaks about it very differently. This book sets forth a positive vision of singleness by responding to 7 common misconceptions, such as the notion that singleness is too hard, requires a special spiritual gift, is a hindrance to ministry, or is a waste of sexuality. Addressed to the church as a whole and written by a single pastor, *7 Myths about Singleness* will help readers better understand, support, and empower the singles around them to contribute to the flourishing of the church as a whole."

### SERMONS

- "Testimony and Redeeming Biblical Singleness" – Christopher Yuan, delivered here at CCC: <http://christscovenant.org/sermons/yuan-1/>
- "5 Misconceptions About Singleness" (audio) – by Sam Allberry: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/5-misconceptions-about-singleness/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- "Singles and the Church: An Interview with Lore Ferguson" – Christine Hoover: <https://cbmw.org/women/womanhood/singles-and-the-church-an-interview-with-lore-ferguson/>
- "The Beauty and Challenge of Singleness" – Drew Hunter: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/the-beauty-and-challenge-of-singleness/>
- Chapter 7 of The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller

# Parenting

## Description

Throughout the Bible, children are seen as a blessing and a gift from God. There are some in our church who have prayed often and have received children. Now that children have arrived, they maybe don't always feel like a blessing and gift but rather a curse. Hopefully, through this process, we can learn to discuss the struggles of parenting, encourage one another in parenting and see that we need one another in order to raised fully formed children.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Deuteronomy 6:1-25
- Psalm 78:5-8
- Proverbs (the entire book!)
- Ephesians 6:1-4

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Shepherding a Child's Heart by Tedd Tripp (Amazon, ~\$5)
  - Has discussion questions at the end of chapters
  - Blurb: "Written for parents with children of any age, this insightful book provides perspectives and procedures for shepherding your child's heart into the paths of life. *Shepherding a Child's Heart* gives fresh biblical approaches to child rearing."
- Parenting: 14 Gospel Principles That Can Radically Change Your Family by Paul David Tripp (Amazon, ~\$20)
  - Blurb: "In the midst of folding laundry, coordinating carpool schedules, and breaking up fights, many parents get lost. Feeling pressure to do everything "right" and raise up "good" children, it's easy to lose sight of our ultimate purpose as parents in the quest for practical tips and guaranteed formulas. In this life-giving book, Paul Tripp offers parents much more than a to-do list. Instead, he presents us with a big-picture view of God's plan for us as parents. Outlining fourteen foundational principles centered on the gospel, he shows that we need more than the latest parenting strategy or list of techniques. Rather, we need the rescuing grace of God—grace that has the power to shape how we view everything we do as parents."

### VIDEOS

- Shepherding a Child's Heart DVD series (see book version above)
- "Christ Centered Parenting" video series by Russell Moore and Phillip Bethancourt (LifeWay, ~\$15)
  - Six video sessions
  - Blurb: "Do you ever feel ill equipped to talk about the cultural issues of our day? Designed to help you lead your children and teens in a confident and responsible way, this 6-session resource will equip you to address pressing cultural topics which children of all ages, from preschoolers through young adults."

### ARTICLES

- "iPhones, iPads, and Christian Parenting" – Russell Moore: <https://www.russellmoore.com/2012/11/05/iphones-ipads-and-christian-parenting/>
- "Parents, Require Obedience of Your Children" – John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/parents-require-obedience-of-your-children/>
- "Mom and Dad, Your Job is Not Over" – David Hinkley: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/mom-and-dad-your-job-is-not-over/>
- "How Do I Stop Losing It With My Kids: Getting to the Heart of Your Discipline Problems" – William Smith: <https://www.ccef.org/resources/minibooks/how-do-i-stop-losing-it-my-kids-getting-heart-your-discipline-problems/>

# One Anothering

## Description

When reading the Bible we cannot help but see the overwhelming number of passages that say something about “one another.” If you google “one another passages,” you’ll find list upon list of passages that have the words “one another” involved. The takeaway should be that we can not do the Christian life on our own. We need others to grow in the ways that God intends.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Acts 2:42-47
- Romans 12:9-21
- Ephesians 4:1-16
- 1 John 4:7-11

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Building Up One Another by Gene Getz (Amazon, ~\$15)
  - Has a study guide included in the book
  - Blurb: “Explore with Dr. Getz twelve significant ‘one another’ commands of the New Testament, and follow the practical steps for developing them in your own life and in the life of your church. It’s a long-term building process, but one that pleases God and reaps rewards not just in this lifetime but in the next.”
- Side by Side by Ed Welch (Amazon, ~\$9)
  - Has discussion questions included with each chapter
  - Blurb: “This book offers practical guidance for all Christians who want to develop their ‘helping skills’ when it comes to walking alongside hurting people.”

### SERMON

- “God’s Spirit Empowered Community” - Nate McLaurin: <http://christscovenant.org/sermons/unstoppable-5/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “One Anothers” infographic: [https://s3.amazonaws.com/Challies\\_VisualTheology/One\\_Another.jpg/](https://s3.amazonaws.com/Challies_VisualTheology/One_Another.jpg/)
- “One Another – The Bible and Community” – Tim Challies: <https://www.challies.com/articles/one-another-the-bible-community/>
- “What One Another Means for Our Mission” – Jared Musgrove: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/what-one-another-means-for-our-mission/>
- “Resources for One-Anothering the Word”: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/resources-for-one-anothering-the-word/>

# Scripture Intake

## Description

Understanding Scripture has been a part of the Christian faith since the time shortly after the New Testament documents were written. Often times when we think of Scripture intake we think of a quiet time with our Bible, which is a wonderful and good thing. However, there should be other avenues as well for us to take Scripture in. Actively listening to sermons should be one way in which we reflect and meditate on Scripture. Also our life groups are another way we reflect on and understand more Scripture. The goal of scripture intake is not to have more knowledge or win some arguments down the road, but as Martin Luther put it ... “he who would correctly and profitably reads Scripture should see to it that he finds Christ in it.”<sup>2</sup>

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Deuteronomy 8:1-3
- Psalm 119
- Luke 24:27
- 2 Timothy 3:16

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Spiritual Disciples for the Christian Life by Donald Whitney (Amazon, ~\$12)
  - Has a Study Guide that can be purchased separately (Amazon, ~\$10)
  - Blurb: “This book illustrates why the disciplines are important, showing how each one will help you grow in godliness, and offering practical suggestions for cultivating them.”
  - Chapters 1-3 are particularly relevant and applicable for this topic
- Asking the Right Questions by Matt Harmon (Amazon, ~\$9)
  - Blurb: “We all know that we should read our Bibles—yet at times we struggle with knowing exactly how, no matter how long we’ve followed Jesus. In this empowering book, Professor Matthew Harmon walks us through two simple sets of questions to ask every time we open our Bibles.”

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “Read Scripture” – an app created by the people at the Bible Project
- “Listen Up: a Practical Guide to Listening to Sermons” – Christopher Ash: <https://www.wtsbooks.com/listen-up-christopher-ash-9781906334673/>
- “Five Strategies for Daily Bible Reading” – Gavin Ortlund: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/5-strategies-for-daily-bible-reading/>
- “Skip the Verse, Memorize the Book,” an interview with Andrew Davis: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/skip-the-verse-memorize/>
- “Meditating on God’s Word” – Justin Taylor: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/meditating-on-gods-word/>
- “Two Year Bible Reading Plan” – Stephen Witmer: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/two-year-bible-reading-plan/>

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<sup>2</sup> WA 51,4

# Worship

## Description

We often think of worship simply as singing. We call our service a “worship service,” and we usually think it includes singing and preaching. However, while that certainly is worship, it can be too small of a view of worship. Worship in Scripture is seen as something humanity must do, we are always worshiping. It is just a matter of what the object of our worship is. When we orient our lives around something, or when we find our joy, satisfaction, or hope around a certain person or job, we have fallen into worshiping something other than God. True and proper worship is when we are able to orient our lives around and find our joy, hope, and satisfaction in God alone.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Isaiah 6:1-13
- John 4:20-26
- Romans 12:1
- Hebrews 13:15-16

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- True Worshipers by Bob Kauflin (Amazon, ~\$11)
  - Has a Study Guide available as a free download: <https://g.christianbook.com/ns/pdf/sg/542305.pdf/>
  - Blurb: “Bob Kauflin, a seasoned pastor and musician, opens our eyes to the massive significance of being the type of worshiper God is seeking. Rooted in the gospel of grace and filled with practical application, this book aims to connect Sunday morning to the rest of your life—helping you fulfill your calling to be a true worshiper each and every day.”
- Counterfeit Gods by Tim Keller (Amazon, ~\$13)
  - Has a Study Guide available as a free download
  - Blurb: “Keller exposes the error of making good things ‘ultimate’ in this book, and shows readers a new path toward a hope that lasts. He shows how a proper understanding of the Bible reveals the unvarnished truth about societal ideals and our own hearts.”

### SERMON

- “Idols Abolished,” Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/idols-abolished#flipbook/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “What is Worship?” an interview with John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-is-worship>
- “Worship in Spirit and in Truth” – Ligon Duncan: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/worship-spirit-and-truth/>

# Prayer

## Description

Prayer is one of the central ways we commune with God and seek God's supernatural help. The disciples did not come to Jesus asking him, "how do we preach?" or "how do we read the Bible like you?" Their response to Jesus was "teach us to pray." Unfortunately, prayer for many of us can be a really difficult time for innumerable reasons. However, if we understand the proper place of prayer (that prayer is about praise and the central place of God in our world), then we can begin to see the fruit of prayer.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Psalm 51
- Matthew 6:5-15; 7:7-11
- Romans 8:26-27
- John 17
- Ephesians 3:14-21
- James 5:13-16

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- A Praying Life by Paul Miller (~Amazon, \$11)
  - Has a Study Guide that can be purchased separately (Amazon, ~\$11)
  - Blurb: "Prayer is so hard that unless circumstances demand it—an illness, or saying grace at a meal—most of us simply do not pray. Prayer is all about relationship. Paul Miller lays out a pattern for living in relationship with God and includes helpful habits and approaches to prayer that enable us to return to a childlike faith."
- Studies in Prayer: Developing a Strong Prayer Life (gospelinlife.com, ~\$10)
  - Blurb: "Christians are used to thinking about prayer as a means to get our personal needs met. This study reminds us that prayer is a means to praise and adore God, to know Him, to come into His presence and be changed by Him."

### SERMON

- "True Prayer, True Power," Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/true-prayer-true-power#flipbook/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- *The Valley of Vision* – a resource with prayers of the Puritans, available online at Banner of Truth's website (<https://banneroftruth.org/us/devotional-series/the-valley-of-vision-devotional/>), or in print version in the Resource Center
- "4 Suggestions to Deepen Your Small Group Prayer" – Steve Lee: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-suggestions-to-deepen-your-small-group-prayer/>
- "Praying Specifically" – Brian Elliff: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/praying-specifically/>
- "George Mueller's Strategy for Showing God" – John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/george-muellers-strategy-for-showing-god/>

# Spiritual Gifts

## Description

Spiritual gifts are something that are given to every believer and need to be exercised in our church to glorify God and to serve our church family. Every passage we see about spiritual gifts has the same key themes surrounding them. They seem to always have a theme of love, as if the authors knew we would take our gifts and use them as power plays in our lives. The other theme always seems to be that we are part of a body, and all parts of the body are valuable even though they have different functions.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Romans 12:3-8
- 1 Corinthians 12 – 14
- 1 Peter 4:10-11

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOK

- Beginners Guide to Spiritual Gifts by Sam Storms (Amazon, ~\$15)
  - Blurb: “This book seeks to help answer basic and foundational questions about the what, why, and how of the unique gifts God gives to each of His children. You will discover the purpose of spiritual gifts in the Church and learn how to identify your special mix of gifting. In addition, you will find out how the Holy Spirit uses the supernatural manifestation of gifts to demonstrate God’s presence and power among His people.”

### SERMON

- “Our Gifts, and How to Use Them,” Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/our-gifts-and-how-to-use-them#flipbook/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “How Not to Discover Your Spiritual Gifts” – Tom Schreiner: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-not-discover-spiritual-gifts/>
- “How Do I Discover My Spiritual Gift?” – Juan Sanchez: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-do-i-discover-my-spiritual-gift/>
- “Trust God With the Spiritual Gifts He Gives” – Kristen Wetherell: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/trust-god-with-the-spiritual-gifts-he-gives/>

# Evangelism & Mission

## Description

Matthew 28 is a famous passage because it has what we have called the great commission. We are to make disciples of all nations teaching them all that Jesus taught and commanded. The disciples seemed to interpret this going to surrounding cities planting churches and caring for the poor in these communities. First comes the preaching of the gospel and the conversion of people in the community, then the outworking of the gospel is the caring for others in the community. Primarily the mission of our church is to spread the gospel throughout all the world and then to be concerned with the people in that world.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Psalm 67
- Matthew 9:35-38; 28:18-20
- Acts 1:1-11; 2:37-47
- Romans 10:11-15

## Resources to Use or Consult

### VIDEO SERIES

- “Two Ways to Live” DVD Training Series (Matthias Media): <http://www.matthiasmedia.com/outreach/two-ways-to-live-resources/two-ways-to-live-course/>
  - The DVD is ~\$27, the Leaders Guide is ~\$7, and the participants’ manuals are ~\$12
- “Wurmbrand” - a Six Session Discipleship Series
  - Study Guides are available (~\$3 each)
  - Blurb: “This new video curriculum enables any believer to lead American Christians along the path followed by so many of our persecuted brothers and sisters. Your group will discuss and discover what it means to truly stand for Christ, to evangelize even our ‘enemies’ and to fully forgive and even love our persecutors.”

### SERMON

- “Every Day Usefulness,” Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/every-day-usefulness#flipbook>

### BOOKS/STUDIES

- When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself by Steve Corbett & Brian Fikkert (Amazon, ~10)
  - Has study questions at the end of chapters
  - Also has 6 video sessions online (12-17 minutes each – [chalmers.org/media](http://chalmers.org/media))
  - Blurb: “The reality of poverty can seem overwhelming. 2.5 billion people around the world live on less than two dollars a day. 45 million people in the U.S. live below the poverty line. The church serves as the hands and feet of Christ in a community, it has a unique role in poverty alleviation. It’s where people, whether materially poor or not, encounter Jesus’ compassion and transformative power. Spiritual brokenness leads to poverty but Jesus’ power can restore that brokenness. Even though the scale of poverty can seem overwhelming, churches of any size can walk alongside people who are poor, breaking the bonds of poverty.”

# Work/Rest

## Description

Creation is a really interesting story, where we see God working to create the world. He goes through creating the different dimensions of our world—the sky, land, animals—and it culminates in His creation of mankind. After all of this work being done He rested. In the Ten Commandments when God commands a Sabbath rest, it goes back to the creation and says that because God rested after His work, His people are supposed to do the same. This also comes up in the New Testament, where we are told to work for the Lord and to enter His rest. The pattern in Scripture seems to be in rhythms of work and rest.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Genesis 1-2:3
- Exodus 20:8-11
- Psalm 127:1-2
- Hebrews 4

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOKS

- Crazy Busy by Kevin DeYoung (Amazon, ~\$10)
  - Has a free Study Guide (downloadable as a PDF)
  - Blurb: “DeYoung addresses the busyness problem head on — and not with the typical arsenal of time management tips, but rather with the biblical tools we need to get to the source of the issue and pull the problem out by the roots.”
- Rest and Work (from the Theology of Work Project Series – christianbooks.com, ~\$6)
  - Includes discussion questions
  - Blurb: “Resting is more than just observing the Sabbath and refraining from work. It involves communing with God in a way that satisfies and refreshes us spiritually. In the Bible, the rhythm of work and rest is an important topic. This study traces this theme through Scripture and explores four main topics: why we need to rest; why we can’t rest; how rest is restored; and how we can rest in faith.”

### SERMON

- “The Peculiar Sleep of the Beloved” - Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/the-peculiar-sleep-of-the-beloved#flipbook/>
- “Work & Rest” - two part sermon series delivered at CCC: <http://christscovenant.org/sermon-series/work-rest/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “The Story of Work & Why It’s So Complicated for Women” – Carolyn McCulley: <https://erlc.com/resource-library/3/3253/>
- “How to Embrace Rest When Work Never Ends” – Courtney Reissig: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-to-embrace-rest-when-work-never-ends/>
- “4 Ways the Gospel Transforms Work” – Tim Keller: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/tim-kellers-4-ways-gospel-transforms-work/>
- “Work” – an edition of the ERLC’s magazine *Light*, from the winter of 2017: <https://erlc.com/resource-library/light-magazine-issues/work-winter-2017/>

# Suffering

## Description

In the beginning, God created the world, and all that He created was good! And someday, when Christ returns and establishes the new earth, there will be pure goodness once again for His people. But in between, we live in a fallen, sin-infected, broken world—where even as the beloved of God, we experience unspeakable pain and suffering at times. Scripture teaches us to expect suffering, but even when we know it is coming, it can be a disorienting and perplexing experience—causing us to despair, doubt, or even be tempted to deny our Savior. So it's important that we prepare ourselves; and it's important that we help one another as we face the sufferings of this life with the truth of the gospel.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Lamentations 3:1-33
- Psalm 42
- Romans 8:18-39
- 2 Corinthians 1:1-11; 4:16-18; 12:7-10
- James 1:2-4

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOK

- Surprised by Grieving by R.C. Sproul (christianbook.com, ~\$11)
  - Has Study Guides available (~\$4)
  - Blurb: “Sproul reminds us that we should not be surprised by suffering; instead, we should expect pain and sorrow in this life. God promises in His Word that difficult times will come upon us, but He also promises that He allows suffering for our good and His glory, and He will never give us more than we can bear with His help. Dr. Sproul offers solid biblical counsel and comfort for those undergoing suffering and for those who minister to the suffering, counsel that helps believers stand in times of trial with faith in a God who is both loving and good.”

### VIDEO SERIES

- Loss – DVD series from the Christian Counseling Education Foundation (CCEF)
  - Has a Study Guide available (~\$8)
  - Blurb: “Loss is one of life’s inescapable realities. It is a part of the human experience. Loss forces us to realize that even the good things we want and enjoy are fragile, temporary and unrecoverable. This video study provides a biblical framework for understanding loss, and equips you to give wise help as you walk alongside others who are grieving.”

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “Suffering: Where to Turn When Life Falls Apart,” Steve Brown: <https://newgrowthpress.com/suffering-where-to-turn-when-life-falls-apart/>
- “Suffering is a Doorway, Not a Dead End” – Gavin Ortlund: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/suffering-is-a-doorway-not-a-dead-end/>
- “Insanity and Spiritual Songs in the Soul of a Saint: Reflections on the life of William Cowper” – John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/insanity-and-spiritual-songs-in-the-soul-of-a-saint/>
- “Remember Death” – Matthew McCullough: <https://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/remember-death/>

# Navigating Change

## Description

While it is true that God never changes, our circumstances in the world that He created most certainly do. Our lives are in a constant state of change. And while many of the changes we experience seem minor and insignificant, there are some that can feel particularly weighty. When (not if) those changes come, we need to turn to the God who never changes for stability and peace. And we need God's people to help keep us steady.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Numbers 23:19
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; 12:13-14
- Philippians 4:4-7
- James 1:16-18

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOK

- Chasing Contentment by Erik Raymond (Amazon, ~\$13)
  - Has discussion questions for chapters
  - Blurb: "Raymond helps us understand what biblical contentment is—the inward gracious spirit that joyfully rests in God's providence—and then how we learn it. Giving us practical guidance for growing in contentment in various areas of our lives, this book will encourage us to see contentment as a priority for all believers. By God's grace, it is possible to pursue the high calling of contentment and anchor our joy in God himself rather than our changing circumstances."

### VIDEO SERIES

- "How to Be Good & Angry" – DVD series by Paul David Tripp
  - 1 DVD with six sessions, ranging from 19-31 minutes each
  - Has a free Study Guide
  - Blurb: "We all experience anger. It seems natural to the human experience. It eats at us and shows itself in so many different ways: coldness, sarcasm, yelling, rage, self-injury, disrespect, abuse, and silence. Do we have to resign to just managing our anger, keeping a tight lid on it, so it does not overflow? The sessions on this DVD seek to help us deal with the fact that we have a problem with anger, but that we can be hopeful as we face it. The Bible is shockingly honest about anger's cause and wonderfully encouraging about its cure."
- "Lost in the Middle" by Paul David Tripp (Amazon, ~\$40)
  - Ten 25 minutes sessions
  - Has a free Study Guide
  - Blurb: "As we grow older, we look back on life and have regrets. We're discouraged by the passing of our dreams. We realize we're not the person we once wanted to be. Some people turn into cynics. Others become paralyzed. But the Bible teaches that this life is not our destination. It's a preparation for a final destination. And that makes all the difference. Lost in the Middle reveals that difficulties in life aren't evidence of God's inattention. In fact, they are signs of His grace, love, and faithfulness. God will take us where we don't want to go to produce in us what we couldn't achieve on our own. It's called uncomfortable grace. When you begin to accept uncomfortable grace, it changes everything about your life. Aging, regret, and disappointment are no longer paralyzing realities. You no longer have to be afraid of life. You can move forward with anticipation because God is with you. Don't get lost in the middle of your story."

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- "Change is Good" – Erik Raymond: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/erik-raymond/change-is-good/>

# Generosity

## Description

The natural tendency of the human heart in our fallen world is to accumulate and keep things for ourselves. We tend to think that the pathway to happiness is to have more possessions and more money. Yet Jesus lived quite differently than that! As Paul said about Jesus, “though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9). As those who’ve trusted in Him and been changed by Him, we are called and empowered to live in a similar way. In a world marked by selfishness and greed, we are to be marked by selflessness and generosity.

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Matthew 6:19-24
- Luke 21:1-4
- 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:1-15
- 1 Timothy 6:17-19

## Resources to Use or Consult

### STUDY

- The Treasure Principle **Bible Study**: Unlocking the Secret of Joyful Giving by Randy Alcorn (Amazon, ~\$7)
  - Blurb: “Readers of Randy Alcorn’s bestseller *The Treasure Principle* encountered a revolution in material freedom and generosity that utterly changed their quality of life. In this companion Bible study, the principles become personally applicable and more real than ever, with a powerful combination of biblical concepts, practical quotations from the book, thought-provoking questions, group discussion starters, and short Scripture passages for meditation and memorization. Managing God’s investment in their lives will become a new delight, as Christians learn to put their resources to their most rewarding use.”

### VIDEO SERIES

- “Generosity: Responding to God’s Radical Grace in Community” – DVD series from [gospelinlife.com](http://gospelinlife.com)
  - 7 sessions, 32-38 minutes each (located in the CCC Library)
  - Has a Study Guide available for ~\$10
  - Blurb: “According to the Bible, generosity is so much more than just being generous with your money. The source of generosity that is truly radical is a gospel-transformed heart that has received the costly grace of God. In this sermon series originally preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Tim Keller and Abraham Cho look at what it means to be generous through service, through relationships, through hospitality, through the privileges and power we hold, and lastly, through our wealth.”
- “The Treasure Principle: Discovering the Secret of Joyful Giving” **DVD series** by Randy Alcorn
  - Six sessions, 30 minutes each (located in the CCC Library)
  - Blurb: “These sessions taught by Randy Alcorn and Ryan Rush, are filled with dynamic graphics, special effects, reenactments, historical photographs, and interviews with “generous givers” to help you discover the astounding secret: how joyful giving brings God maximum glory and His children maximum pleasure.”

### SERMONS

- “Generous: Like Our King” – Nate McLaurin: <http://christscovenant.org/sermons/generous2/>
- “Contentment” – Charles Spurgeon: <https://www.spurgeon.org/resource-library/sermons/contentment#flipbook/>

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- “How the Gospel Makes Us Generous and Content With Our Money” – Zach Nielsen: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/generous-and-content-with-our-money/>
- “4 Creative Ways to Be Generous” – Kristen Wetherell: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/4-creative-ways-to-be-generous/>

# Sexual Purity

## Description

Sex was created by God and given to human beings as a good gift to be enjoyed within the context of marriage between a husband and wife. Yet, since the fall of mankind, sin has complicated and corrupted this good gift of God. When we look at the world, we expect to see perversions and selfishness of sexuality, but as God's people, we are to be marked by purity and obedience to our Savior. Thankfully, God has not left us to fight against sexual temptation on our own. He's given us His Spirit, His Word, and His people to help us. Talking about our sexual struggles and sin (whether single or married) may not be comfortable, but it is important for us if we are to grow in godliness!

## Important Scriptural Passages

- Genesis 2:18-25; 39:1-23
- Proverbs 5:1-23
- Song of Solomon
- Matthew 5:27-30
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-20
- Ephesians 5:1-17

## Resources to Use or Consult

### BOOK

- Sex Isn't the Problem (Lust Is): Sexual Purity in a Lust-Saturated World – Josh Harris (Amazon, ~\$9)
  - Blurb: "I was preparing a message on lust when I realized that the book I wanted to consult hadn't been written. That book would make it clear that only Jesus Christ can free us from the hopeless treadmill of shame and guilt that so many well-intentioned people end up on. It would instill a love for holiness and a hatred for sin without dragging the reader's imagination through the gutter. And it would be for both men and women, because I've learned that lust isn't just a guy problem—it's a human problem."

### STUDIES

- FOR MEN | "False Love: Overcoming Sexual Sin" DVD series
  - 9 sessions
  - Has a Study Guide
  - Blurb: "Sexual sin is rampant in our culture and becoming more acceptable with devastating consequences. This series is for the guys in your group to view and interact together to help each other guard our hearts in this battle."
- "True Betrayal: Overcoming the Betrayal of Your Spouse's Sexual Sin" – DVD series
  - 9 sessions
  - Has a Study Guide
  - Blurb: "This series is for ladies in your group to help those who have been sinned against by their husbands or fiancé in the area of sexual purity. Ladies will be directed to practical hope and healing that can only be found in God's Word and the gospel."

### ARTICLES, ETC.

- "Positive Purity" – Tim Challies: <https://www.challies.com/articles/positive-purity/>
- "Pleasure Set Him Free from Sexual Sin: Augustine (354-430)" – John Piper: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/pleasure-set-him-free-from-sexual-sin/>
- "Every Woman's Silent Struggle" – Marian Jacobs: <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/every-womans-silent-struggle/>



